

## Seven Oaks School Division

### 2008-2009 Budget

#### Press Release

#### Does this make any cents?

While keeping expenditures well below the provincial average, Seven Oaks School Division is still required to raise taxes. Seven Oaks trustees have continued to lobby the provincial government for changes to the funding formula to benefit divisions like Seven Oaks that have limited commercial assessment, but have had little success this year. We suggest that the monies allocated to the Tax Incentive Grant should have been directed into a fairer Equalization formula within the funding formula.

Consider this. Homeowners in the three school divisions within Minister Bjornson's constituency, Evergreen, Lord Selkirk and Seven Oaks, all pay school taxes but those taxes vary wildly. In 2007, net taxes on a home assessed at \$100,000 in the three divisions were:

Evergreen (16.3 mills)	\$208.50
Lord Selkirk (21.9 mills)	\$460.50
Seven Oaks (26.8 mills)	\$681.50

One would assume that Evergreen is a low spending division, that Lord Selkirk is in the middle and that Seven Oaks spends lavishly. Not so, in 2007 per pupil spending is highest in Evergreen and lowest in Seven Oaks:

Evergreen	\$9,437 per pupil
Lord Selkirk	\$9,302 per pupil
Seven Oaks	\$8,648 per pupil

The 2008-09 education funding announcement is huge but in its zeal to hold boards to current levels of spending and taxation it at best freezes and at worst increases disparity.

This evening the Board of the Seven Oaks School Division passed its 2008-2009 budget, increasing its Mill Rate in the City of Winnipeg to 27.690 mills from 26.582 mills. An increase of 1.108 mills or 4.17 percent. This is a tax increase of \$49.86 on a home assessed at \$100,000.

We see this as a necessary investment in our students, staff, community and facilities. The Board believes that the quality of educational opportunities for the children of Seven Oaks should not be diminished because of where they live. "As we've said many times, we are a frugal board, we focus our expenditure on the classroom and we get the most for our dollars" said Seven Oaks Chair Bill McGowan. "Even with this expenditure increase we expect to have either the lowest or second lowest cost per pupil in Winnipeg and have the second highest mill rate. This is due to our limited commercial tax base."

## Quick Budget Facts

The expenditure increase is driven by:

- Costs associated with opening the new West Kildonan Collegiate and reopening Edmund Partridge Community School as a middle school.
- Costs associated with growing enrolment.
- 12 additional teaching positions devoted to class size reduction in the early years and the new high school physical education credits.
- 23 additional education assistant positions to serve students with special needs.
- Rising fuel, utilities and maintenance costs.
- A \$40 per pupil increase in school budgets to eliminate user fees to parents for their children's participation in school programs.